

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 11528

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ETRD, IN, VN
SUBJECT: INDIAN TRADE/AID WITH NORTH VIETNAM

REF: STATE 188246

1. PUBLISHED GOI DATA SHOW THAT INDIAN EXPORTS TO NORTH VIETNAM IN INDIAN FISCAL YEAR 1972/73 (APRIL-MARCH) AMOUNTED TO ABOUT \$21,000. COMMODITY COMPOSITION OF THIS TRADE, IN DESCENDING ORDER BY VALUE WAS (1) BICYCLE PARTS (\$8,250), (2) CARBON PAPER (\$8,100), (3) DIESEL MARINE ENGINE (\$2,410), (4) GOATSKIN (\$1,780), AND (5) HANDLOOM CARPETS (\$290). DATA FOR IFY 1973/74 THROUGH NOVEMBER 1973, THE MOST RECENT MONTH FOR WHICH DATA ARE AVAILABLE, SHOW INDIAN EXPORTS AMOUNTING TO \$2,256 IN THOSE EIGHT MONTHS. COMMODITIES EXPORTED IN THAT PERIOD WERE (1) HANDWORK OF WOOD (\$1,441), (2) COMMERCIAL SAMPLES NOT CLASSIFIED BY KIND (\$800), AND (3) POSTAL PACKAGES (\$15).

2. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF WHEAT SEED DISCUSSED BELOW (PARA 3) THE EMBASSY HAS FOUND NO EVIDENCE OF PARTICIPATION BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA OR ANY AGENCY OF THE GOI IN THIS TRADE. PUBLISHED DATA OF THE STATE TRADING CORPORATION SHOW NO EXPORTS TO NORTH VIETNAM OF ANY KIND OVER THE WHOLE PERIOD OF EXISTENCE OF THAT COMPANY. COMPARABLE DATA ARE NOT AVAILABLE FROM FIVE OTHER STATE TRADING ENTITIES, THE PRODUCT LINE ONLY ONE OF WHICH, HOWEVER, THE HANDICRAFTS AND HANDLOOMS EXPORT CORPORATION, WOULD APPEAR TO OVERLAP WITH SOME NORTH VIETNAMESE PURCHASES. THUS WHILE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO STATE CATEGORICALLY THAT NO STATE TRADING ENTITY

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HAS EXPORTED TO NORTH VIETNAM, THE POSSIBILITY SEEMS RATHER REMOTE.

WE HAVE, OF COURSE, REPEATEDLY REVIEWED THE APPLICABLE PROVISIONS OF U.S. LAW WITH GOI OFFICIALS AND WE BELIEVE THEY UNDERSTAND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE.

3. IN A CONVERSATION AUGUST 23 BETWEEN THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR AND DEPUTY SECRETARY P. K. BOUDHWAR WHO STATED HE WAS SPEAKING WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND AUTHORIZATION OF HIGHER LEVELS OF THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, THE LATTER DESCRIBED INDIAN ASSISTANCE TO NORTH VIETNAM. HE SAID SEVERAL EXPERTS HAD BEEN DISPATCHED TO NORTH VIETNAM IN THE PAST YEAR OR SO TO PROVIDE ADVICE TO HOSPITALS AND IN THE FIELD OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY. THE GOI HAS ALSO PROVIDED SCHOLARSHIPS FOR 15 NORTH VIETNAMESE STUDENTS TO COME TO INDIA TO STUDY ENGLISH. THEY ARRIVED IN MID-1973. HE SAID THAT IN THE PAST YEAR A CERTAIN NUMBER OF BAGS OF SEED HAD BEEN SOLD ON A COMMERCIAL BASIS BY THE NATIONAL SEEDS CORPORATION LTD., A PUBLIC SECTOR FIRM, TO NORTH VIETNAM SO THAT TESTS COULD BE CONDUCTED TO DETERMINE THE SEEDS' SUITABILITY IN NORTH VIETNAMESE CONDITIONS. THE NATIONAL SEEDS CORPORATION ACQUIRED THE SEED FROM PRIVATE INDIAN FARMERS AND COOPERATIVES AND IN EFFECT SERVED AS A CLEARING HOUSE FOR THE TRANSACTION.

4. BOUDHWAR CONCLUDED BY SAYING THERE IS NO CURRENT PLAN FOR ANY FURTHER GOI COMMERCIAL OR AID TRANSACTIONS WITH NORTH VIETNAM AND NO REQUESTS FROM NORTH VIETNAM FOR SUCH TRANSACTIONS ARE PENDING. HE CONFIRMED THAT THE GOI IS FULLY AWARE OF APPLICABLE U.S. LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS AND THEIR IMPLICATION FOR ANY POSSIBLE RESUMPTION OF U.S. BILATERAL AID TO INDIA.

5. THE FOREGOING IS ALL THE INFORMATION WE HAVE CONCERNING INDIA'S AID AND TRADE RELATIONSHIP WITH NORTH VIETNAM.
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